

## How 'cracksells in Britain

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# IRA KILLS HOLIDAY FAMILY IN MISTAKEN IDENTITY BOMB ATTACK



**Murder mile: Cars litter the road near Killeen after the blast. (Report, Page 2.)**

## How 'crack' sells in Britain

by MICHAEL PRESTAGE

Posing as a cocaine trafficker, Browne won the confidence of young addicts. He found that crack was being traded for between £20 and £25 a deal.

In seven years there has been a huge increase in the use of crack in the US. America already has one million crack abusers.

With the addiction comes escalating crime as addicts struggle to pay for their craving. Police fear crime will spiral if the drug becomes established in Britain.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said last night: 'To date we have only seized relatively small quantities of crack, but it is a potential problem. We would never underestimate the degree of professionalism with which

major drugs operations are run. It is big business.'

One of the difficulties of crack for the police is the ease with which it is prepared by 'cooking' cocaine powder with water and baking soda. The end product is cracked into small nuggets which are up to 90 per cent pure cocaine.

Three-quarters of those who experiment with it become hooked after the first use.

DRUG squad officers at Scotland Yard are liaising with their counterparts in America to limit the spread of the highly-addictive drug crack, which an investigation by *The Observer* today proves is already being sold in Britain.

On page 15, reporter David Browne tells how he was taken to buy the drug in south London. He has established it is also available in Liverpool.